

Neighbourhood Plan Update May 2015

Community Consultation Results

In January 2015 the Neighbourhood Plan produced a document entitled *Consultation Draft - Indicative Policy Areas and Proposals* which was circulated to residents and businesses in Oxspring. The document included a questionnaire and asked for the community's comments on the proposals. Two public consultation meetings were also held. Copies were distributed to 500 households and businesses and 105 responses were received back – a response rate of 20%. The responses on the questionnaires were collated and analysed by Planning Aid England, the results of which reveal overwhelming support for the Plan's proposals.

The Next Stage

One of the key elements of any Neighbourhood Plan is that it is in line with the Local Authority's Local Plan. BMBC's Local Plan has not yet been finalised, and probably won't be until the end of 2015, adding some difficulties in producing a definitive NP.

However, following the support from the community and the advice of Planning Aid England, it has been decided to continue with a Neighbourhood Plan for Oxspring redrafting policies to be consistent with BMBC's emerging Local Plan and the views of local residents and businesses.

From the beginning of the new tax year more funding has been made available from Locality and an application for a further grant is being prepared, which is expected to be approved. Specialist consultants will be appointed to take the NP forward, paid for by the additional grant, who will redraft the policies grouped under the headings of Development; Environment; Community Services and Facilities; Movement. This is still a work in progress but will be along the following lines.

Development

The major concern of residents is the number, style and type of any future development in the village, particularly housing. In BMBC's emerging Local Plan (which will remain in force until 2033) there are **no sites** allocated in Oxspring (or the immediate surrounding area) for housing development, but small scale development may take place on appropriate sites (ie not Green Belt) that may become available. These are known as "Windfall Sites". It is, therefore, necessary that the NP has policies to cover future development on such sites, including appropriate, design, housing mix and numbers of new dwellings.

Environment

An audit of the village's natural resources will be undertaken and policies will be written to provide protection and enhancement of the Local Green Infrastructure (woodland, hedgerows, rivers etc), Local Green Spaces (eg Bower Dell, the Anthills, Gordon's Garden etc) and Local Wildlife Sites, Habitats and Features.

Community Services and Facilities

An audit of the village's existing services and facilities will be undertaken and policies written to protect and enhance those services and facilities for the future. For example, it has long been an ambition of the village to provide up to date changing facilities etc for anyone using the playing fields for sport and recreation. If it is practicable to do so, in line with Barnsley's emerging Local Plan, a policy will be formed along the lines of the previously approved but now lapsed plans for improved facilities on the playing fields' site. This would include improvements to the fields as well as the construction of a suitable building. With

improved facilities both the school and community sports groups could be encouraged to make more use of the site. This could possibly incorporate a commercial venture such as a café, shop, room for hire or cycle hire business in order to provide the necessary funding to maintain the improved facilities.

Movement

An audit of the village's current footpath and cycleway networks will be undertaken and policies written to improve and enhance those networks, including improving access to the Trans Pennine Trail wherever possible. Improving access to the riverside will also be considered. There are issues around land ownership at present but it may be possible to improve access at sites under the ownership of the parish council.

Village Aspirations

In addition to firm policies, which will inform future planning decisions, a Neighbourhood Plan can list aspirations which, although not policies in themselves nevertheless reflect the communities' hopes and aspirations for the future shape of the community. The following aspirations may form part of the NP.

Enhanced Broadband Connectivity. This may resolve itself in time but any efforts to improve the current situation should be sought. If any new dwellings are built in the village developers should seek to obtain the best possible broadband connection for those dwellings.

A New School. There are currently no plans in Barnsley's emerging Local Plan to build a new school in Oxspring. However, if that situation changed in the future a new school on a larger site with adequate drop off/pick up facilities and with either its own or safe and easy access to playing fields and sports facilities would be desirable. If the improvements to the playing fields take place and a new school becomes a realistic possibility, using the playing fields' site may no longer be an option for the new school. Careful consideration would then need to be given to a possible alternative site.

Green Energy. The feasibility of a green energy scheme for the village is being researched and may well form part of the future aspirations of the village.

Fully improved access to the TPT for bicycles, pushchairs, wheelchair users etc from Roughbirkworth Lane and/or the playing fields would be a costly project, but if funding becomes available through a Community Infrastructure Levy or grant aid, for example, improved access to the TPT at either or both of those sites would be highly desirable.

Keeping the Community Informed

The parish council will continue to update the community as the details of the NP policies emerge and there will be further opportunities to comment on those policies during a six week statutory consultation period later in the year.